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BLM ALASKA
FRONTIERS

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News about BLM-managed public lands in Alaska

BLM Alaska

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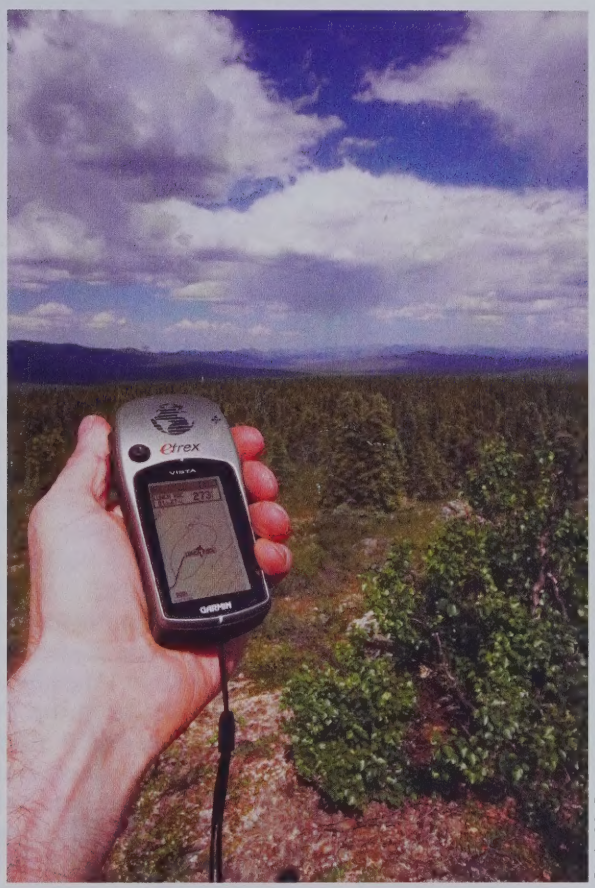
Seeking the Hidden

Geocaching on Alaska's public lands



Craig McCaa

Geocaching is a relatively new activity, but with approximately 2,400 caches now located in Alaska, it's one that's already shaping outdoor adventure in the state, including on BLM-managed public lands.

At least 10 geocaches have been placed in the White Mountains National Recreation Area alone. Others are hidden on public lands along the Denali, Steese, and Dalton highways. The BLM's 730-acre Campbell Tract in Anchorage hosts 15 geocaches.

Visiting new places like these was partly what motivated Dave Lyons, now of Cary, North Carolina, to locate more than 200 geocaches during the several years he lived in Fairbanks.

"In Alaska, most of the caches I went to, it was like, *Wow! This is this great area that I would never have dreamed of going to unless I was hunting for this little box.* A lot of the cachers [in Alaska] specifically put caches in places to bring you to something that would be very difficult to find if you were not familiar with it," Lyons says.

According to the Web site geocaching.com, the term 'geocaching' originated in May 2000, about the time the U.S. government disabled Selective Availability, its intentional degradation of GPS signals. This sudden tenfold improvement in accuracy made it possible for anyone with an off-the-shelf GPS unit to navigate to within 10 to 50 feet of any given point on the globe—assuming you could walk, ski, swim, float, or fly there!

This level of precision would have astounded a 19th century navigator, but it also leaves just enough inaccuracy to provide a challenge for those seeking carefully hidden geocaches.

—continued on page 4

Alaska

Jerry Brossia: Adventurous Spirit Cultivated on an Ohio Farm

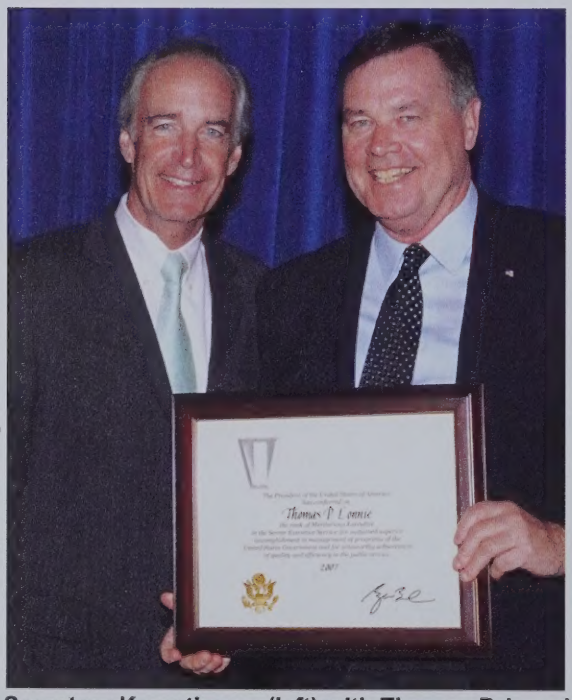
Jerry Brossia, Authorized Officer of the Joint Pipeline Office with Trans-Alaska Pipeline Pump Station #3 in background.

Meet Jerry Brossia, federal Authorized Officer for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, across the conference room table and you'll find a politically savvy land and natural resource professional with enough knowledge about the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System to write several volumes. About the last place you would ever envision him is on a dairy farm, "about four miles across the water from Toledo [Ohio] Zoo." As a broad smile slides across Brossia's face, he completes the metamorphosis to a farmer in the blink of an eye.

He attributes his most important life lesson to his grandfather. His grandfather was an avid hunter, trapper, and fisherman who farmed land that was a former battlefield. "There was always an abundance of battlefield relics for us kids to discover," Brossia recalled, "arrowheads, cannon balls, knives, you name it—Ft. Meigs was a major battlefield in the early 1800s and my grandfather's farm was right on top of it." Brossia clearly remembers the day when he was six years old and his grandfather told him, "If I were you, I'd go to Alaska."

Alaska stayed on Brossia's mind, and by the time he was in seventh grade he all but had his guns packed and was ready to head north. Instead, he spent his summers working on a commercial shooting preserve taking care of dogs, feeding birds, and hunting whenever possible. At night, roars of lions drifted from the Toledo Zoo as he fell asleep, dreaming of a future safari.

Brossia has worked with Alaska's land, natural resources, and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System for more than 30 years. "Relationships are the key to success," Brossia reflects, "personal, business, and spiritual." Those relationships have grown into lasting friendships, producing valuable lessons from some notable Alaskans along the way. One of his most valuable lessons came from Jack Kerin, a geologist with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Kerin taught



Tami Heilemann, BLM Washington

Secretary Kempthorne (left) with Thomas P. Lonnie

Presidential Recognition

BLM-Alaska State Director Thomas P. Lonnie received the Meritorious Executive Presidential Rank Award on Wednesday, May 28, 2008, in Washington, D.C., from Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne. Each year this award recognizes a small group of career Senior Executives and Senior Professionals for exceptional long-term accomplishments. Winners of this prestigious award are strong leaders, professionals, and scientists who achieve results and consistently demonstrate strength, integrity, industry, and a relentless commitment to excellence in public service. Award winners are chosen through a rigorous selection process. They are nominated by their agency heads, evaluated by boards of private citizens, and approved by the President. The evaluation criteria focus on leadership and results. All recipients receive a framed certificate signed by the President.

Former BLM-Alaska State Director (2002-2006) and current BLM Deputy Director Henri Bison, along with former BLM-Alaska Associate State Director and current New Mexico State Director Linda S.C. Rundell received the Secretary's Executive Leadership-Silver Awards.

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Brossia *—continued from page 2*

him that there is a relationship between all things, an "interrelationship of systems that can be revealed in all of life's situations if one just looks for it," Brossia explains.

Brossia's "lessons learned" came from many different people. "There are a lot of experts around that are most willing to talk to you," he commented, "you just have to go take a chance and do something or you'll watch your life pass by." Brossia believes the secret to his success is that Alaska is a pioneer state where one can come up with a dream, talk to people who have lived the dream, then go out and build your own dream. . . "It's an opportunity state," Brossia reflects.

The hot issues facing Brossia at the Joint Pipeline Office include coordinating and issuing BLM regulatory permits to start the gas line project, and then developing a federal monitoring program. Also high on Brossia's list is revamping the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System right-of-way Memorandum of Agreement, so it is clear what future terms and conditions may be necessary for reliable and safe operations.

What's in the future for the Joint Pipeline Office? Brossia would like to see a level of participation "where higher-level representatives work together to assure collaboration within in the Joint Pipeline Office in the years to come. Collaboration and diverse perspective lead to innovation," Brossia smiles, "and innovation is the key to success." Success is something Brossia is very familiar with. "If somebody else didn't want to do it, I was most eager to do it," Brossia revealed.

Today, trophies from several of Brossia's African safaris are scattered throughout his home, reminders of a time when life's adventures beckoned as he fell asleep to the roar of the Toledo Zoo's lions. Brossia has lived a life filled with adventure, helping to protect and develop Alaska's untamed wilderness, and, just having fun. Grandpa would be proud.

—Laura Chase, former Public Affairs Specialist for the Joint Pipeline Office

Simple Pleasures: Bird-watching

It is 6:30 a.m. and about 30 bird enthusiasts have flocked to BLM-Alaska's Campbell Tract, 730 acres of wilderness in Anchorage's backyard. Each Thursday morning in May, BLM-Alaska biologist Bruce Seppi, gives guided bird walks to educate the public about birds that migrate to the Tract from many parts of the world. "Over the weeks you realize that you have watched the migration unfold," Seppi remarks. Warm clothing and curiosity about songbirds are all anyone needs to enjoy these weekly walks, but a good pair of binoculars helps identify birds.

Seppi leads our group onto the trail in the early morning chill before distant traffic noise ramps up. Seppi describes how he takes bird surveys, what he listens for and how to identify birds by either sight or sound. "Statistically, if you listen for two minutes, you'll hear whatever is in the area," Seppi says, adding that soon "you can hear the city start to wake up."

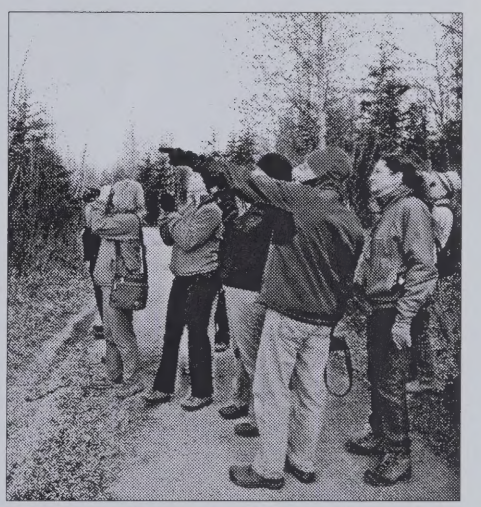
The tiny songbirds fly 4,000 to 6,000 miles to raise their young in the forest at Campbell Tract. Once the young have fledged, they leave. But today they are arriving, and we all strain to identify the varied bird calls.

Suddenly, the group stops to listen. A Varied Thrush's melancholy song hangs in the still morning air. A Yellow-rumped Warbler flits in front of us. Everyone grabs binoculars, but the bird blends into the bright spring green.

Without seeing these elusive feathered migrants, Seppi emphasizes we have to rely on the bird's call to identify it. This can be problematic, especially when similar species sound similar, and there can be differences within a species. Seppi explains that last year's fledglings—now breeding adults—are hearing breeding calls for the first time. The birds incorporate these new notes into their songs, causing variations within the same species. There are also regional differences in songs depending where the birds migrated from.

To help identify bird songs in the past, Seppi used cassette tapes that had bird song recordings, then later a CD, which wasn't easy to use for fieldowork. Now he uses a MP3 player—small, portable, and a good tool for field identification.

"The MP3 player won't replace knowledge of bird songs, but it's a good backup and it's mobile. Plus the digital sound is good. It's quick to manipulate and hear (the recording)." Today, however, Seppi never needs to turn the MP3 player on. His recall is clear and members of the group begin to call out on their own as they learn to identify the birds.



Early morning spring bird walks on Campbell Tract reveal an abundance of newly arrived migrant songbirds. Wildlife biologist, Bruce Seppi, points to a bird identified by its song.

All too soon, the two-hour walk is over. As we rush off to work, we know we can identify the birds on our own when we return to the BLM-Alaska's Campbell Tract to enjoy the 12 miles of trails waiting for us in Anchorage's backyard.

—Pam Eldridge
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Craig McCaa

Many caches consist of an Army surplus ammo can or other waterproof container containing a log book and whatever tokens cachers contributed. You're welcome to take an item if you contribute one yourself.

"My location must remain secret, even though this story is all about location. Let's just say I'm somewhere in the one-million-acre White Mountains National Recreation Area north of Fairbanks, and I'm closing in on a hidden treasure of sorts, one that I'm trying to find with the cell phone-sized global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver in my hand.

My GPS says I should be standing 30 feet directly in front of my elusive prize, if the latitude and longitude I downloaded from the Web site geocaching.com are to be trusted. I see nothing there but sun-drenched tundra. Off to my left a bit is a dense thicket of black spruce trees. Could it be in there? I claw my way into the trees and emerge a minute later holding my very first geocache.

What I've found is an Army surplus ammo can tightly sealed against rain and snow. I pry off the top and discover an odd assortment of items left by previous visitors. A yellow Livestrong™ bracelet, a disposable camera, hand warmers, a survival whistle, a deck of playing cards.

In a sealed plastic bag is a logbook listing those who have found this cache before me. I count six entries in the previous two years. I add my name before resealing the ammo can and carefully placing it back where I found it.

As I leave my first cache in the White Mountains, I make sure I have left the site exactly as I found it—no litter, no footprints, no broken branches. Not only is it the right thing to do, but who wants to leave clues that would give the next geocachers an unfair advantage?"

—Craig McCaa

Geocaching —*continued from page 1*

Finding its place on public lands

Up to now, the BLM and other federal agencies have mostly regarded geocaching as a wholesome family activity that gets people outdoors and improves their navigational skills.

That's not to say there haven't been occasional problems with geocaching on public lands. Damaged vegetation and soils around heavily visited caches have raised concerns in a few parks, and some agencies have determined that placement of caches is incompatible with management regulations for federal wilderness areas.

Lyons says he encountered Alaska land managers and private property owners who didn't want geocaches placed on their land. "They considered geocaches trash," he says.

For responsible geocachers like Lyons, the solution in that situation was clear—*Don't hide caches where they're not welcome.* Most geocaching Web sites and brochures emphasize that landowners' permission must be sought before placing caches and that geocachers must obey all laws and rules pertaining to that area.

For its part, BLM-Alaska has been receptive to geocaching on the public land it manages.

"Because of the low impact of this kind of recreation, we've decided that this generally doesn't require a permit for public lands in Alaska," says BLM outdoor recreation planner Randy Goodwin. "And this approach has worked well so far."

"That may be partly because of the lower number of public land visitors we have in Alaska," Goodwin says. "But I credit the local geocachers, too. Many of them link to our Web site and inform people about use restrictions on our trails. Some even suggest bringing a trash bag along to pick up litter."

It's clear that for some geocachers, responsibility doesn't end with placement of the cache. "There's also demonstrating good stewardship," says Anchorage geocacher Mike Malvick. He's been working with the BLM and other geocachers to relocate a few Campbell Tract caches so they're farther from sensitive streambanks and bear habitat.

"The lower the impact we have on any land where we cache, the more likely we will be allowed to continue to play the game there," Malvick explains.

Fortunately for all involved, the nature of the game helps reduce its impacts. The caches are small and discretely hidden. Geocachers want them to stay that way.

—Craig McCaa
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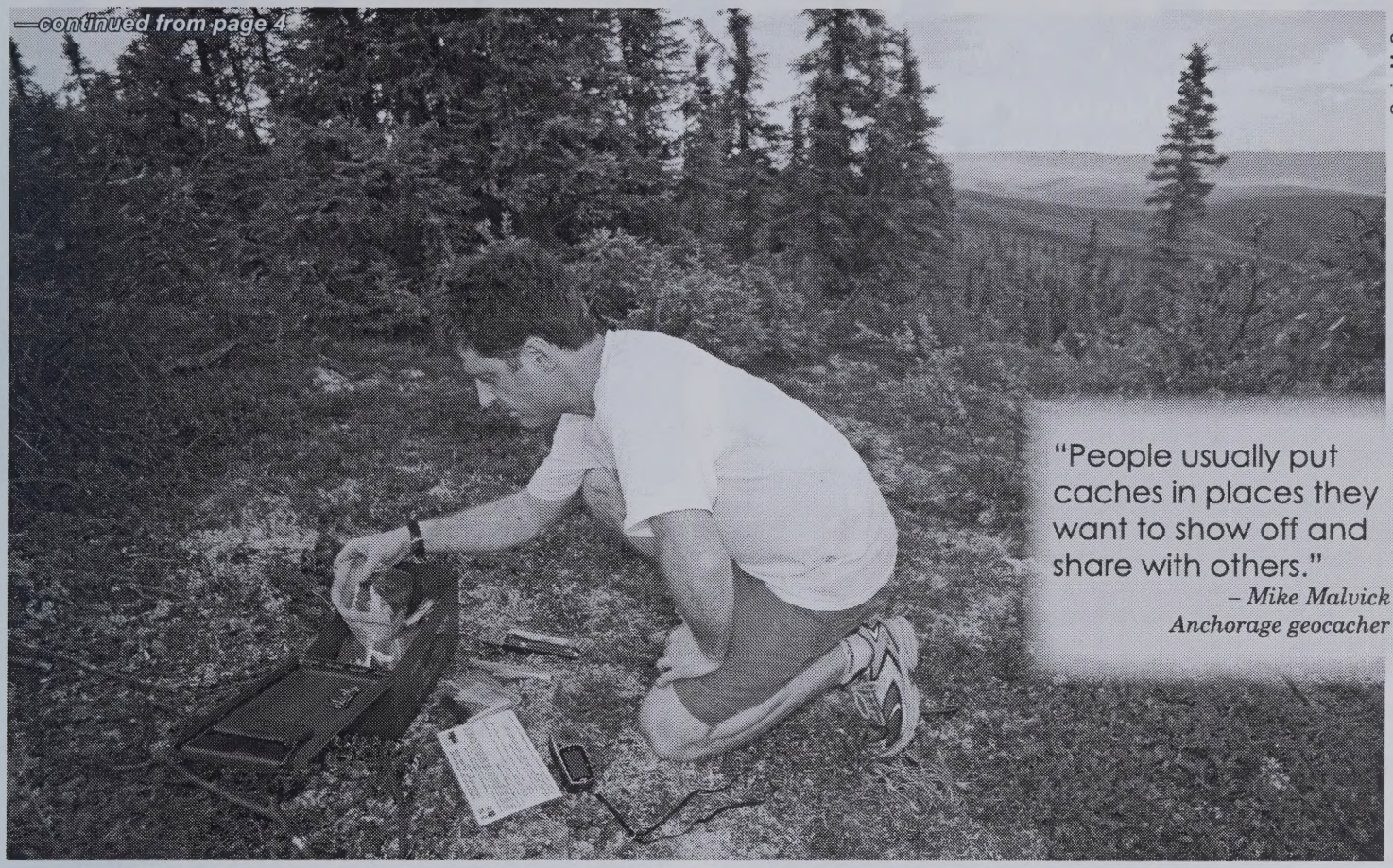


Craig McCaa

The author checks out a geocache named "Lunch Rock 360° View" in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Fifteen geocaches are located on public land within the BLM's 730-acre Campbell Tract in Anchorage.

Geocaching 101

What it is: An outdoor adventure game involving Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers. The object is to use location coordinates to find a hidden object called a "geocache." This is typically a waterproof box containing a logbook and other small items.

How to get started: All of the information you need is on the Web. The largest Web site devoted to geocaching with more than 580,000 caches around the world is www.geocaching.com. Other sites are listed below. You can find latitude and longitude coordinates of nearby caches to load onto your GPS. These Web sites can help you learn how to use your GPS and how to play the geocaching game.

Before you geocache: Make sure you know whose land you'll be visiting and what restrictions there might be on its use. Avoid disturbing historic or cultural sites, and always be alert for bears or other hazards.

For more information: "Cache In Trash Out" is an environmental cleanup effort supported by the international geocaching community.
Learn more at www.cachintrashout.org

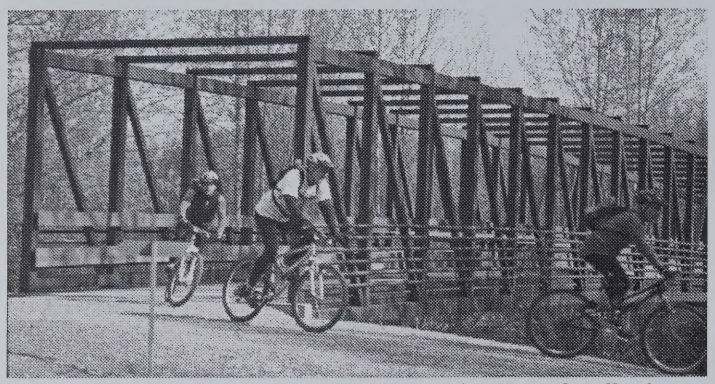
Also check:

Geocaching.com
Geocachealaska.org
Navicache.com
TerraCaching.com

The Campbell Creek Science Center's Midsummer Nights Series will feature a free session on geocaching on July 30. For information, call 907-267-1247 or visit www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter/ccsc_calendar.html.

Take It Outside!

Why should we all get out and explore BLM public lands this summer?



The Campbell Tract in Anchorage has 12 miles of trails that offer four seasons of outdoor recreation activities. Popular activities include hiking, running and biking in the summer and skiing, snowshoeing and dog mushing in the winter.

Spending time outside is not only fun, it may also be vital for our health. Alaska's public lands offer a wealth of places to spend quality time with friends and family and reconnect with nature.

Recent research suggests that outdoor activity and natural settings have a positive effect on the physical, mental, and developmental health of both children and adults.

Children who spend more time outdoors tend to be more physically active. They also have improved concentration and memory, and more positive classroom behavior. Time spent outdoors as a child has lasting positive effects. For example, the majority of adults who participate in outdoor, human-powered activity (such as hiking, biking, or skiing) participated in that activity at a young age.

The nature connection

Published studies about the benefits of nature-based education and recreation emphasize the need for children to connect with the natural environment. For example:

- Children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) have milder symptoms after playing outside than when they've played inside. And the more natural the play settings, the milder the symptoms.
- Daily exposure to natural settings has been associated with children's improved ability to focus and with enhanced cognitive skills.
- Students in classrooms with natural views (trees, grass, shrubs) exhibit better concentration than students in classrooms that look out at buildings, dirt, or paved surfaces.
- Students in schools that use nature-based outdoor education show marked improvement in social studies, language arts, math, and science.

These findings demonstrate the need for educators and parents to help students establish and maintain that important connection with the natural world. For more detailed information about these studies, please visit the Children and Nature Network at www.childrenandnature.org.

(Below) **Hiking the Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail in the Steese National Conservation Area.**

BLM/Dennis Green

BLM/Dennis Green

Fishing the Gulkana National Wild River.

Ending nature deficit

In his book, *Last Child in the Woods,* Richard Louv links the lack of exposure to nature with disturbing childhood trends such as depression, obesity, and Attention Deficit Disorder. Rather than camping under the stars, fishing, or chasing butterflies, kids TODAY spend an average of 45 hours per week indoors plugged into some kind of electronic media, including video games, TV, and the Internet.

Alienation from nature deprives children of the opportunity to hike or snowmachine with family members to a public use cabin, to sit under a tree and listen to a symphony of spring songbirds, or to go fishing or hunting with relatives. As our children miss out on the benefits natural settings provide, don't they also miss the opportunities to give back to nature by becoming stewards of the earth and its natural resources?

As parents, educators, and caretakers of the land, we can reverse this trend. We can encourage children to play outside and explore the wonders of their own backyards. We can make the effort to spend time with children in the outdoors—in the yard, neighborhood park, or any other green space, no matter how small.

We can also visit Alaska's public lands—municipal, state, and federal—and look for programs and activities for exploring wild places in all seasons. BLM public lands in Alaska are the backyards of many rapidly growing communities. These lands provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation and education for the entire family.

Help energize the future stewards of our planet. Guide Alaska's children so they experience the sense of balance and restorative energy the natural environment provides, and enjoy the benefits yourself along the way. Here in Alaska, let's make sure there are still plenty of children out in the woods.

–Jeff Brune
Campbell Creek Science Center
jeff_brune@blm.gov

BLM places to "take it outside"

BLM's **Campbell Creek Science Center,** on the Campbell Tract in the heart of Anchorage, offers solutions to nature-deficit disorder for 40,000 annual visitors. The outdoor classrooms of the Campbell Tract introduce families and children to forests, streams, wetlands, meadows, and a rich abundance of plant and animal life. Attend a scheduled outdoor program at the Science Center with your family or take a summer hike on the Campbell Tract's network of outdoor recreation trails. Visit www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html or call 907-267-1247 for more information.

Join the **National Public Lands Day** celebration July 26 at BLM's Sourdough Creek Campground near Glennallen. Bring the family and pitch a tent. Lend a hand with trail projects, learn Leave No Trace camping techniques, compete in life jacket relays, and join others for songs around the campfire. A pancake breakfast the following morning wraps up this free public event. Call 907-822-3217 for more information.

The **Nome Creek valley**, 57 miles northeast of Fairbanks, is a prime access point for summer recreation in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Bring the family and visit for the day or stay in one of two campgrounds. Other family activities include hiking, gold panning and fishing.

Many more places to go:

Trails: Iditarod National Historic Trail, Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail, Steese National Conservation Area, and White Mountains National Recreation Area.

Waterways: Beaver Creek National Wild River; Birch Creek National Wild River; Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River; Fortymile National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River; Gulkana National Wild River; and Unalakleet National Wild River.

Roadways: Dalton Highway, Richardson Highway, Denali Highway, Steese Highway, Elliott Highway, and Taylor Highway.

www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/recreation.html

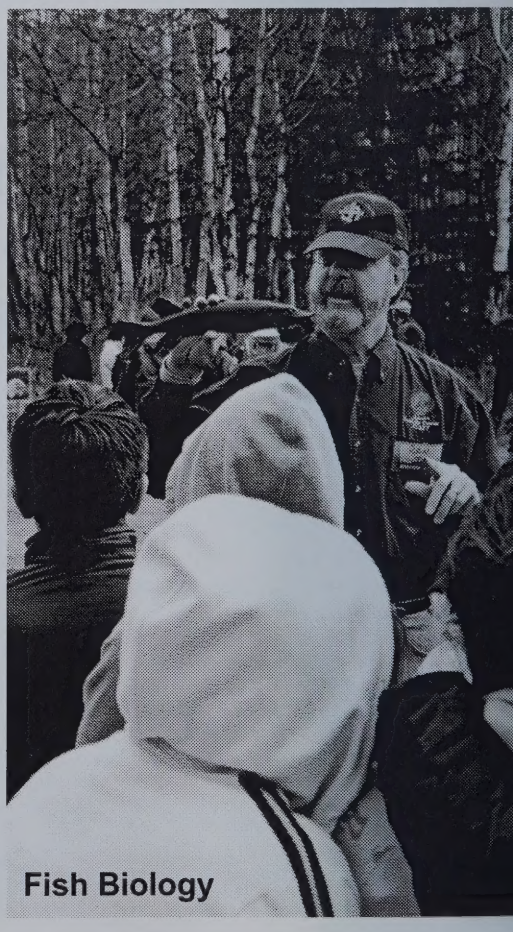
BLM/Dennis Green

Enjoying the outdoors at the Campbell Tract in the company of friends.

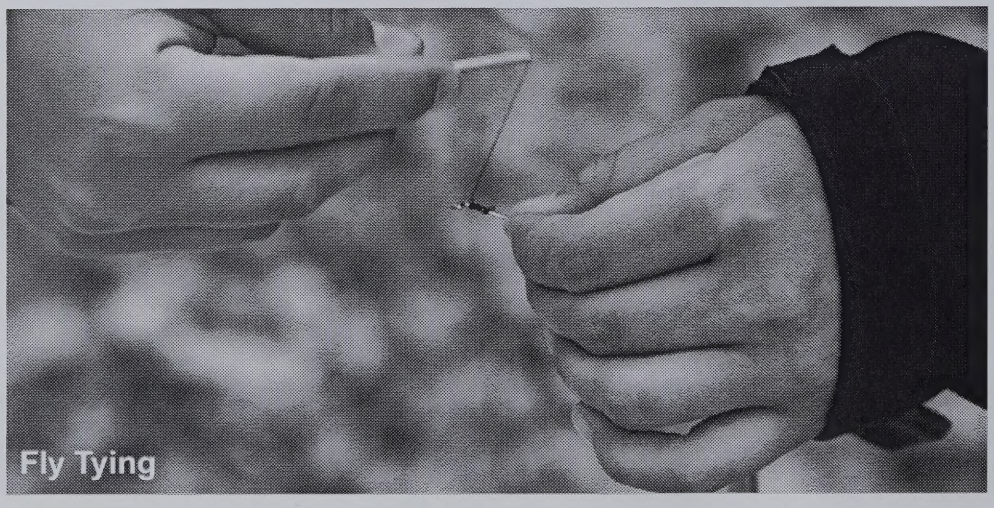
Outdoor Week 20

BLM-Alaska's Campbell Tract Hosts 34th *Outdoor W*

Fly Tying



Fish Biology



Fly Tying

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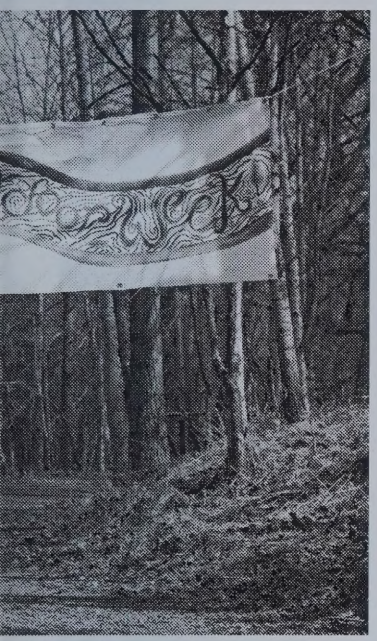
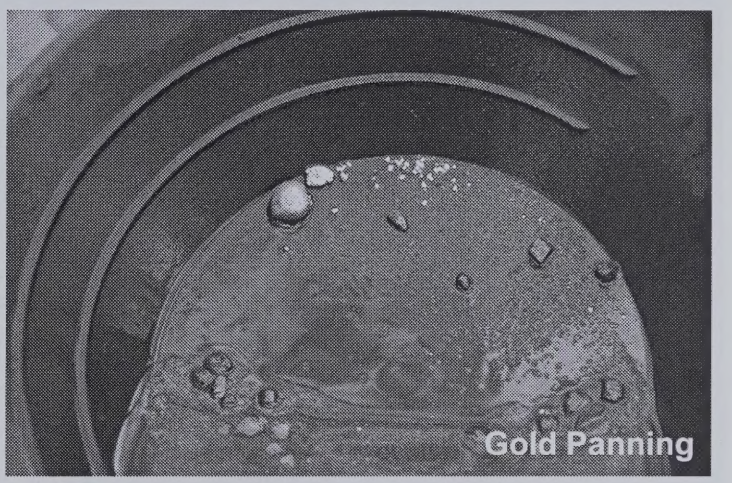


- More than 1,900 sixth graders participated.
- Activity learning stations, included fly tying, fish biology, gold panning, and birding.
- Other stations (not shown) included archaeology, bear safety, low-impact camping, soils science, and much more.

Photos by Thom Jennings and Pam Eldridge

Gold Panning


Gold Panning

Birding

Lands Are Changing Hands:

Lime Village Receives Final Patent

It's been more than 36 years since the first and largest land settlement of its kind in the history of the United States, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), was signed into law on Dec. 18, 1971. BLM-Alaska is responsible for implementing ANCSA and has been working through the complicated processes for transferring title from federal public lands to individual Alaska Natives and Native corporations.

Mary Kenick

Left to right: Ramona Chinn, BLM Deputy State Director, Alaska Lands; Richard Thwaites, BLM Branch Chief Adjudication II; Nancy Bobby, President of Lime Village; and June McAtee, Vice President, Land and Natural Resources, Calista Corporation, at the April 9th signing ceremony.

On a sunny August day in 2007, four BLM employees packed up the final land conveyance patent and certificate, and boarded a Cessna 206 to fly to Lime Village, 185 miles west of Anchorage. West of the Alaska Range, it was equally sunny and pleasant as Lime Village residents assembled and waited for the plane to arrive. However, as the Cessna approached the Lake Clark Pass, bad weather forced the plane back to Anchorage, cancelling the on-site ceremony.

Front and back of the minted coin awarded to land conveyance recipients.

Despite the transportation glitch, BLM-Alaska rescheduled and presented Lime Village's final patent at a signing ceremony held at the BLM-Alaska State Office in Anchorage on April 9, 2008. This completed a process that began more than 36 years ago with the initial ANCSA filing and resulted in Lime Village receiving final patent of their village land. Present for the signing were Nancy Bobby, president of Lime Village Company, and June McAtee, vice president of Lands for Calista Corporation.

Lime Village derives its name from the nearby limestone hills. It received a specially minted commemorative coin along with its final land conveyance patent and certificate.

—Pam Eldridge
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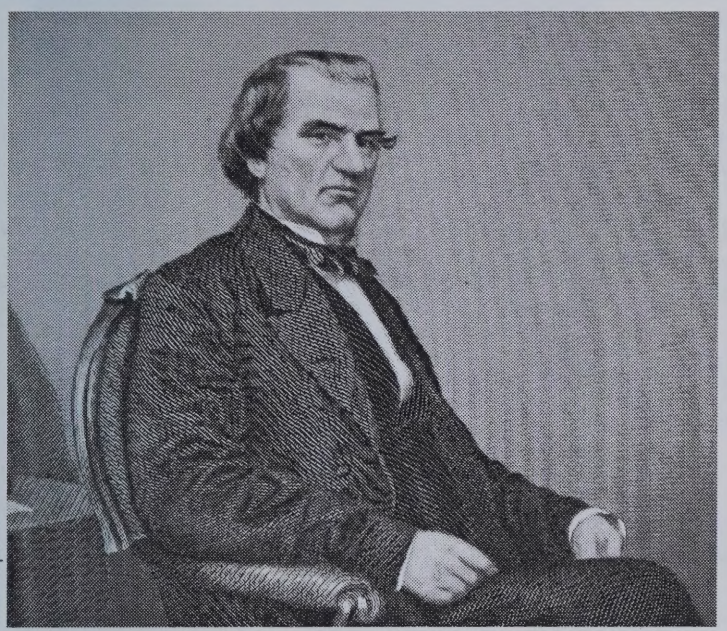
Journey into Alaska's Past

with BLM-Alaska Archaeologist Robert King

The Unsung Hero of the Alaska Purchase

This year is the 200th birthday of a man who was critically important for Alaska's history, yet he's a person few people associate with Alaska – the 17th President of the United States (1865-1869), Andrew Johnson (1808-1875). Johnson became President following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln at the close of the American Civil War.



See Caption

Formal Presidential portrait of Andrew Johnson– painting by Alonzo Chappel, from photograph by Mathew B. Brady, 1823-1896. Robert E. King collection from a historic book of paintings by Alonzo Chappel. The photo is also in the Brady-Handy Collection at the Library of Congress.

President Johnson's often-overlooked significance for Alaska was his key support for Alaska's purchase in 1867, too often credited only to his able Secretary of State, William H. Seward. While Seward's role was undeniably critical, without Johnson's steadfast support the Alaska purchase might not have happened. Indeed, the timing could hardly have been worse.

In 1867, the United States was still reeling from the Civil War's bloody and costly aftermath. The immediate post-war period was embroiled in controversy on how to best "reconstruct" the former "traitorous" Confederacy of southern states. Johnson fell right into the middle of this controversy and was consumed by it. His arguments for Lincoln's policies of leniency in dealing with the South were blasted by those out for vengeance and punishment. As matters worsened and the politics became more vicious, the U.S. House of Representatives impeached Johnson in 1868 (though he was not convicted by the Senate). Johnson left his office in disgrace. Despite these problems and the taint of being the first sitting President nearly removed from office, Johnson's key support for the purchase of Alaska remains one of his positive legacies. History now views Alaska as his major foreign policy achievement.

Johnson first supported the purchase of "Russian America" in 1859 while serving as a Senator from Tennessee. Russia, still reeling from its own Crimean War debts and foreseeing the increasingly impossible task of governing and supplying its far-off American colony, was ready to sell by the late 1850s. The Russians justifiably feared that the British Empire would eventually seize the colony, just as the British had earlier planted an illegal British trading post on Russian soil along the Yukon River. Further, selling Alaska to the United States would create a buffer between Russia and the expansionist British in their drive westward out of Canada. However, the looming American Civil War in 1859 made the purchase impossible.

After the war, when Russian officials renewed their offer to sell, Seward and Johnson quickly accepted and began their campaign to win support. Like certain other national mid-19th century visionaries, Johnson favored expansion of the United States for economic and strategic reasons, including the doctrine "Manifest Destiny" idea that America was "destined" for greatness by its expansion westward. Johnson and Seward were undaunted by those who deemed Alaska as "Johnson's Polar Bear Garden," "Seward's Folly," or their "Icebergia." Instead, they argued that the United States would reap benefits from owning the Russian's American colony. Fortunately, Johnson and Seward were able to persuade just enough members of Congress to the same viewpoint.

On March 30, 1867, Seward (representing President Johnson) agreed to the proposed sale. Russia's price for Alaska was $7.2 million, around two cents per acre. After debate and persuasive testimony before Congress by Seward, the Senate narrowly approved the treaty of purchase on April 9, 1867. Johnson signed the Alaska purchase into law on May 28, 1867.

There is a final twist to Johnson's story, even lesser known than his important role in supporting Alaska's purchase. Another land acquisition that Johnson and Seward advocated at the same time, but ultimately couldn't achieve was the purchase of the Danish West Indies. Unlike the Alaska purchase, this was indeed derailed. In 1917, for $25 million, the United States belatedly purchased the strategic Caribbean islands known today as the U.S. Virgin Islands. The irony was that this purchase came in the 50th anniversary year of the Alaska Purchase. Johnson, the little known hero of Alaska's purchase, would have been pleased – a most fitting way to celebrate the victory that he and Seward achieved in 1867.

—Robert King
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Glennallen Has a New Field Office Manager: *Will Runnoe*

Please stop by the BLM Glennallen Field Office to congratulate Will Runnoe on his promotion to Field Office Manager. Runnoe has been the Glennallen Visitor Services and Recreation Branch Chief for the past four years.

Runnoe came to Alaska to fulfill his life-long dream to be part of the outdoor experience that he feels is dwindling in the Lower 48. With his love for fishing, hunting, hiking, and floating rivers, Runnoe takes advantage of every opportunity to get out on the land and witness first-hand all that Alaska offers.

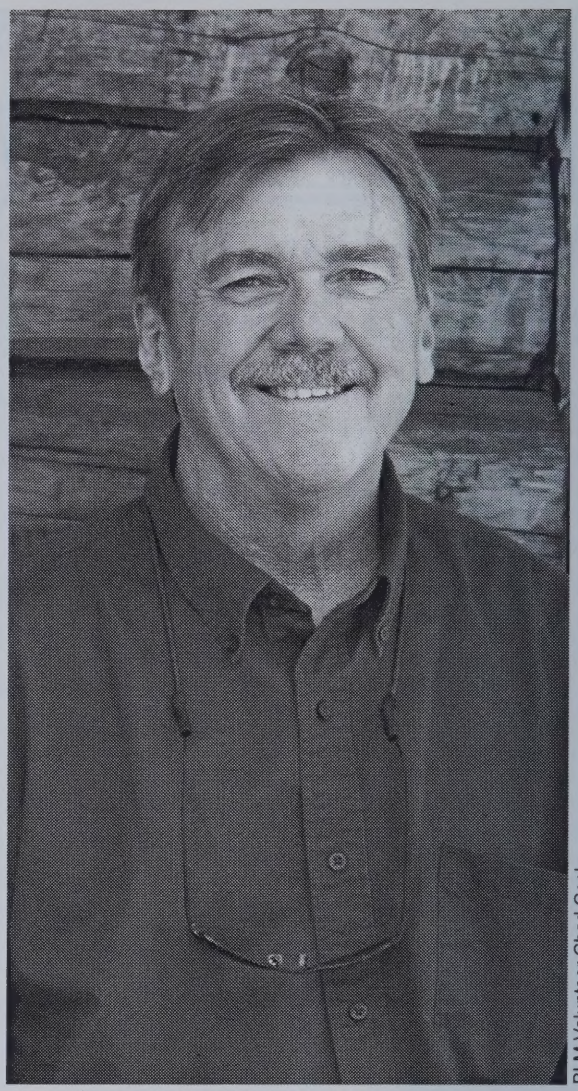
While discussing his new position, he smiles. "I see this new position as a tremendous opportunity and challenge. These past four years have allowed me to review and understand the complex issues associated with land management and land patterns in Alaska. I feel fortunate to have played a role in major planning efforts, such as the East Alaska Resource Management Plan and the Gulkana River Management Plan. I look forward to establishing other new step-down plans that will guide management of federal lands in this area for the next 20 years."

Runnoe pauses, thinking about what is to come. "As the BLM continues to finish conveyance of land to Native villages and corporations and to the State of Alaska, it will bring to a close a lengthy, multi-generational process."

"These are exciting times in the State of Alaska, and I truly look forward to serving the public as the Glennallen Field Office Manager while we finalize and establish these long-term land management patterns."

It's clear Will Runnoe has found his place.

—Marnie Graham
marnie_graham@blm.gov



BLM Volunteer Chad Cook

Will Runnoe, Glennallen Field Manager

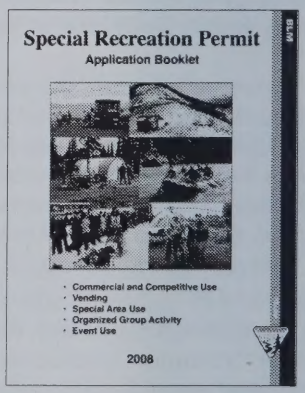
Alaska Recreation Opportunities Await You On-line

Don't miss all the fun and recreation opportunities on BLM-managed public land. Visit the new BLM-Alaska Recreation Web site where you can learn about national wild, scenic, and recreation rivers, special recreation and conservation areas, scenic highways, and safety tips for recreating in Alaska's back-country. Alaska is a year-round recreation paradise – from hiking and rafting in the summer to snowmachining and skiing in the winter. Go to the link:

www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/recreation.html

Special Recreation Permit application booklet now available

The BLM has published a new **Special Recreation Permit Application book** that contains guidance on commercial and competitive use, vending, special area use, organized group activity use, and event use. You can download your copy from the Recreation Web site:



www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/recreation/permits_forms.html

—Vanessa Rathbun
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FRONTIERS Flashes

Late-breaking news from around Alaska

Science Center Receives $15,000 Grant

ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. has awarded a $15,000 scholarship grant to the Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center. The center will use the ConocoPhillips grant to fund scholarships for economically disadvantaged students during the 2008-09 school year. In the three short years since its founding, the nonprofit Friends group has raised more than $92,000 for the Center's quality science education programs and activities for more than 40,000 annual visitors. (Contact: Jeff Brune, 907-267-1255)
www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html

—Teresa McPherson
teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov

Don't Miss National Public Lands Day July 26!

The Copper River Basin is celebrating National Public Lands Day on July 26, 2008, at the BLM Sourdough Creek Campground, Mile 147.5, on the Richardson Highway. Volunteers will work to improve the campground trail and pull invasive weeds. Activities for youth volunteers include a Leave No Trace camping competition and prizes, life jacket and boat safety demonstrations, races, a barbecue, and campfire songs. One free night of camping is available for volunteers on a first-come, first-serve basis on either Friday before the event or the evening of the event. Call Marnie Graham at 907-822-3217 to sign up early.
www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo/national_public_lands.html

A young volunteer explores weeds on National Public Lands Day

—Marnie Graham
marnie_graham@blm.gov

BLM part of 2008 Alaska Envirothon

Ramone McCoy and Randy Goodwin represented BLM at the Alaska Envirothon at Chena Hot Springs on April 24, 2008. About 65 high school students from around Alaska competed for a chance to go to the national Canon Envirothon competition July 28–Aug. 3 at Northern Arizona University in Tucson. The Envirothon program is the largest high school environmental education competition involving both U.S. and Canadian students.

For the Alaska Envirothon, students visited a variety of stations on soils, water quality, and other natural resources. The BLM's wildlife station featured a variety of animal skins and skulls and Ramone McCoy demonstrated adaptive features animals need for survival. Randy Goodwin assigned students a motorized trail management problem scenario and had them develop solutions. In the evening, McCoy and Goodwin judged student team presentations on their solutions to the trail management issues.
www.envirothon.com

—Randy Goodwin
randy_goodwin@blm.gov

2008 Alaska Wildland Fire Outlook

Each spring, climatologist and wildland fire management staffs study atmospheric conditions, snow-pack, drought, vegetative conditions, and past data for Alaska to produce a seasonal wildland fire outlook.

This year, the eastern Alaska snow pack is less than normal; there have been reports that fires ignited in 2007 continued to smolder all winter. The U.S. Drought Monitor map portrays eastern Alaska as abnormally dry. NOAA Climate Prediction Center is forecasting warmer-than-normal temperatures for May, June, and July for sections of western Alaska, southwest Alaska, and parts of the North Slope. Below-average temperatures are predicted for the Alaska panhandle. Portions of the Kenai Peninsula and Western Cook Inlet have a projection for above-normal potential for wildland fires, due to the elevated risk of large fires in beetle-killed timber.

For daily fire weather forecasts and weekly outlooks, go to http://fire.ak.blm.gov. Morning highlights (a short review of fire activity), fire news releases, the *Alaska Situation Report*, and fire maps are available on this site throughout the fire season.

Prescribed Burn Plan

On June 28-29 (weather and fuel conditions permitting) staff from the Alaska Fire Service, Fairbanks District Office, and Alaska State Division of Forestry, will conduct a prescribed burn of experimental fuel treatments at a research site on Nenana Ridge.

—Mary Lynch and Doug Stockdale
Alaska Fire Service
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—continued from page 13

Midsummer Nights Science Series at Campbell Tract and Naturalist Classes

Free workshops held throughout the summer. For information, 907-267-1247 or www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter/ccsc_calendar.html

Series Schedule

JUNE 25 Invasive Weeds: It's invasive weeds awareness week in Alaska. Find out more about the growing problems common invasive plants in this area present from Jeff Heys of the National Park Service. You'll meet some of the plants first hand as he leads a short walk to see—and pull—weeds on Campbell Tract.

Tuesdays in July Basic Naturalist Skill Classes: Learn more about Alaska's plants, animals, and other living things; meet others with similar interests; and discover community resources to further develop your knowledge and skills in this class for adults 18 years or older interested learning basic naturalist skills. Tuesday evenings in July from 6:30-9:15 pm. Class size is limited. Pre-registration required by June 27th. Class fee of $85/series.

Viewing wildlife on Campbell Tract.

JULY 9 Where the Wild Things Are: Wildlife biologist Jessy Coltrane, of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, teaches how scientists use radio telemetry to track wildlife movements and activities. Discover how Fish and Game uses this technology to study wildlife around the state. You'll even go outside and try out some radio telemetry equipment.

JULY 16: Favorite Backyard Insects: Learn more about the world's most diverse group of animals from Michael Rasy of the UAF Cooperative Extension Service. Discover insect characteristics and hunt for insects in the woods and fields of Campbell Tract.

JULY 23 Ravens: Meet a captive raven up close and learn more about these intelligent birds from Deann Sabol of the Bird Treatment and Learning Center. Ravens are the biggest songbirds and one of the most widely distributed birds in the world.

JULY 30 Geocaching

AUGUST 6 Stories in the Soil: Soil influences all aspects of our lives. We grow our food in it, our water is filtered by it, and we build our homes and roads on it. The soil underfoot also speaks volumes about the natural history and plant communities of an area. Learn what soils can tell you from Mark Clark of the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), who will introduce us to soils and take us out to dig some soil pits.

AUGUST 13 TBA

AUGUST 20 Mushroom Fair: Have fun learning about fungi. Local mushroom enthusiasts will share their knowledge about mushrooms through posters, discussion, and specimens from all over Southcentral Alaska. Bring mushrooms from your own backyard to identify!

—Luise Woeflein
luise woeflein@blm.gov

Anchorage Weeds Partnership Hosts Weeds Fair

The Invasive Weeds Awareness Fair was held June 17 at Russian Jack Springs Park in Anchorage. The fair was a "ribbon cutting" to announce the recently formed Anchorage Cooperative Weed Management Area group (the BLM Anchorage Field Office is a charter member) and to raise awareness of invasive species and how citizens can get involved. Alaska Governor Sarah Palin signed HB330 (Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants) into law at this event and presented a proclamation supporting Invasive Weeds Awareness Week, June 22-28. Campbell Creek Science Center hosted educational activities for "weeds warriors" of all ages at the fair. The Anchorage Field Office will remove invasive species at the Rohn Shelter Cabin on the Iditarod National Historic Trail in observance of 2008 Invasive Weeds Week.

Acting BLM Anchorage Field Manager Beth Maclean and Governor Sarah Palin at Russian Jack Springs Park for Invasive Weeds Awareness Week and the Weeds Warrior program.

Managing Your Public Lands

Land use planning is helping the BLM meet its mandate to manage Alaska's public lands for multiple use and sustained yield. The BLM uses resource management plans (RMPs) for on-the-ground actions and develops environmental impact statements (EISs) to ensure those actions adhere to environmental standards. You can find BLM planning information about these plans at www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html.

East Alaska (7.1 million acres): Published the Record of Decision on Sept. 7, 2007, and implementation of the plan is underway. BLM is developing a proposed activity plan for the Delta National Wild and Scenic River corridor.

Ring of Fire (1.3 million acres): Published the Record of Decision on Mar. 21, 2008, for public land in Southeast Alaska, Southcentral Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. Implementation planning for the Haines Special Recreation Management Area begins soon.

Bay (1.9 million acres): Released the Proposed RMP/EIS and for the Bristol Bay/Goodnews Bay region on Dec. 7, 2007, and is addressing comments. BLM expects to publish the Record of Decision this summer.

Kobuk-Seward Peninsula (11.9 million acres): Released the Proposed RMP/EIS on Sept. 28, 2007, and expects to publish the Record of Decision this summer.

Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (4.6 million acres): Published the Final Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/EIS on May 23, 2008, and expects to publish the Record of Decision this summer.

Colville River: Will publish the Colville River Special Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment this summer.

Eastern Interior (8 million acres): Expects to complete the Analysis of the Management Situation for the Eastern Interior RMP by late Sept. 2008, followed by the formulation of alternatives in Oct. 2008.

Dalton Highway Visitor Centers

Three visitor centers, one in Fairbanks and two along the highway, offer good sources of information and helpful advice for Dalton Highway travelers:

- **Alaska Public Lands Information Center** (APLIC). 250 Cushman Street (historic post office building, basement). 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily, Tues. through Sat. 907-456-0527.
- **Yukon Crossing Contact Station.** Milepost 56, Dalton Highway. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., 7 days a week, has viewing deck over Yukon River.
- **Arctic Interagency Visitor Center**, Milepost 175, Dalton Highway. 10 a.m.-10 p.m. daily.

Discover Glennallen

Fieldnotes

The BLM Glennallen Field Office is publishing *Fieldnotes*, a newsletter packed full of information about programs and issues on public lands in east-central Alaska. Call 907-822-3217 or go to www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html for a copy.

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HOW FAST CAN YOUR HOUSE RUN?

In Alaska, wildland fires burn thousands of acres every year. Some fires threaten or destroy homes and remote cabins. Many of these structures did not have "defensible space," an area you create around your home or cabin where you removed or thinned burnable materials. Defensible space increases the chance of your structure surviving a fire and creates a safer place for firefighters to work.

Get your free FireWise planning book online:
http://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/planning/firewise.pdf

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